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TAGS: [IR](#) [KDEM](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES IN SWEDEN

REF: A. STATE 33385
[1](#)B. 07 STOCKHOLM 00735

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Robert Silverman for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Post has reached out to members of the Iranian community in Sweden over the past year. Post has not yet identified recipients for the Iran Small Grants Program, however, we continue to vet different groups and intend to nominate several candidates in the Fall. Iranian Swedes are the best integrated and most successful Muslim immigrant group in Sweden, and probably among the best integrated in Europe. Thus, we intend to finalize our choices and seek Department support soonest. End Summary.

BACKGROUND: IRANIAN COMMUNITY IN SWEDEN

[1](#)2. (C) Swedish contacts converge on an estimate of at least 70,000 Iranians in Sweden, the third largest Muslim immigrant group in the country, after immigrants from Iraq and the Balkans. Unofficial estimates of the total number of Muslims in Sweden range from 350,000 to 450,000 (Note: The Swedish government does not provide official figures for religious/ethnic composition. End Note). The Swedish Statistics Bureau estimates that Kurds make up the majority of Iranian immigrants in Sweden.

[1](#)3. (C) Embassy contacts in the Muslim community indicate that the Iranians are the best integrated Muslim group in Sweden. A number of Iranian Swedes are highly successful businessmen and the Swedish Parliament includes one Iranian-born member, Reza Khelili Dylami. Post contacts also indicate, however, that many ethnic Iranian Swedes describe feeling isolated from Swedish society and that success varies significantly among the three different waves of Iranian immigrants. The first wave was mainly political activists opposed to the Shah who arrived to Sweden in the 1970s. Post contacts estimate they compose roughly five percent of the current Iranian community and that this group fills the ranks of the Mujahadeen e-Khalq (MEK). The second group, wealthy elite Iranians, arrived from the late 1970s to the early 1980s and have enjoyed significant financial success in Sweden. The third wave, middle class economic migrants, arrived in the late 1980s. Members of this last group are less successful, tend to be employed in the service sector, and continue to drive a stream of migrants arriving to Sweden for family reunification.

IRAN SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

[1](#)4. (C) INITIAL OUTREACH TO THE IRANIAN COMMUNITY IN SWEDEN: Over the past year, as part of the Embassy program of Muslim engagement, Emboffs began reaching out to members of the Iranian community in Sweden. This included inviting Iranian participation in post-sponsored roundtables on Muslim integration in Sweden and meeting privately with prominent

community members, including Masoud Kamali, Professor of Ethnic Relations at Sweden's prestigious Uppsala University and an advisor to Social Democratic Party leader Mona Sahlin; Leili Falsafi, an author and diversity consultant; and Idriss and Loghman Ahmedi, members of the youth wing of the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (KDPI).

15. (C) FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES: Many Iranian Swedes do not belong to organized Iranian political or social groups. Contacts assert that members of the Iranian community are wary of officially organizing on the basis of their ethnicity or religion because they believe it will hinder their integration into Swedish society (ref B). Nevertheless, Post's initial outreach and research has identified some 70 Iranian groups operating in Sweden. Many of these organizations focus on social and cultural bonds, rather than political affiliation.

16. (C) Post has started to identify organizations that could be potential recipients of the Iran Small Grants program. We are requesting additional time to nominate candidates, however, in order to further develop contacts and fully vet these organizations. Many of the groups that are politically active are aligned with MEK. Post contacts also warn that many of the other organizations, social and political, have been infiltrated by Iranian government intelligence organizations.

SILVERMAN